

## AMERICANS ARE VICTIMS OF EUROPEAN DEALERS

Consul in Scotland Sounds Warning of the Traffic in Alleged Antiques, the Many Frauds Perpetrated, and the Bold Impositions on Collectors.

Americans who go prowling about Europe in search of antiques fall easy victims to unscrupulous dealers, according to Consul Maxwell Blake, who makes a report from Dunfermline, Scotland, in which he gives people on this side of the water a solemn warning. He tells at length of the traffic in alleged antiques, the frauds perpetrated and the impositions on collectors.

Mr. Blake says that through the United Kingdom and continental Europe frauds are perpetrated on the inexperienced collector of old silver, china, and period furniture. He says the United States is reputed to harbor more "artistic atrocities" that were purchased as genuine than any other country in the world, and there may be even a greater flow of pseudo works of art to American shores unless the frauds are detected by Government experts or rejected by public taste.

Just now, miniatures and decorated snuff and patch boxes are being most extensively exported by Americans. These and other such small articles, says Mr. Blake, are manufactured by dextrous copyists, and are readily procurable by the gross. He says no one not possessing knowledge of the subject should ever allow himself to be tempted to purchase miniatures unless he is content to possess a cabinet of forgeries.

Copies of color prints are sold to the inexperienced at enhanced prices, says Mr. Blake's report. He points out that "old marks" on china are meaningless. He says the buyer should always insist on written guaranty, as the English curio shops have recently sustained the contention that a false description of an antique is given in the invoice, the purchaser is entitled to full recovery. He finds that much faked Sheffield silver is offered, and that 85 per cent of the pewter that can be found in England and Scotland has been made in the last ten years. Likewise, practically all the "old Dutch" articles of brass, such as alms dishes, pictures, candlesticks, and jardinières are of modern

make, although they may reach the dealer by way of Holland. The production of "old masters' and ancestors continues a lucrative industry in Great Britain," says Mr. Blake, "that being a matter for serious regret to the collector and sometimes even to the dealer, suggested by these fraudulent works of art should be abased to such mean ends."

Regarding the clever ruses of the antique furniture dealers, Mr. Blake says: "Large stakes are here frequently played for and the cunning of the dealer is well-known. The dealer would do nothing except to take the chairs back upon the terms of an ordinary sale and then the nobleman's profit of \$1,000. Then, having made it possible for it to be sold the chairs had been purchased from Lord Blaine, a famous collector, the dealer turned around at once and sold the chairs again at a big profit, the collector for the unwary are old chests, cabinets, grandfather clocks, ancient Stradivarius violins, old armor, medals, and a multitude of other varieties of so-called antiques."

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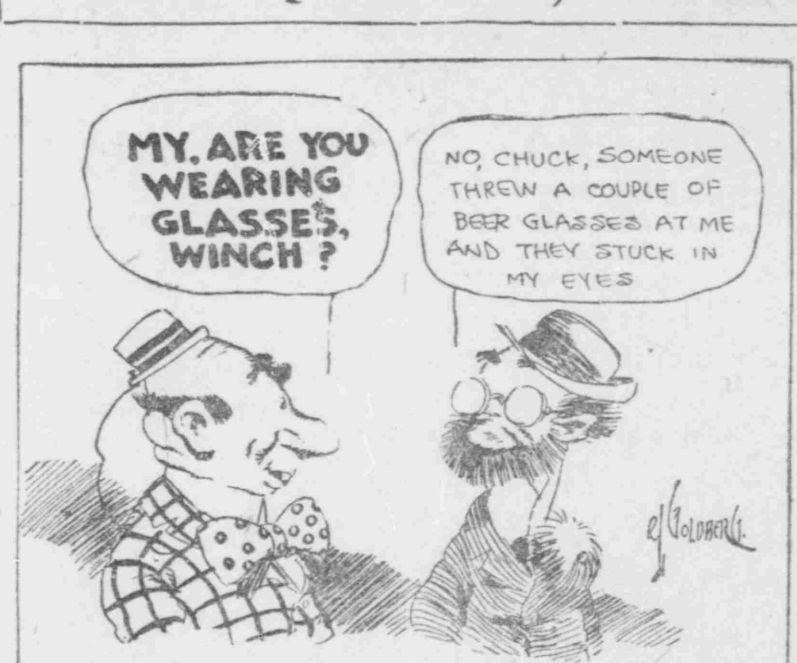
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